The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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Sowing and Reaping.

We live by thought, and by the men who spake
The darkness into light;
Who bade the spirit's morning break
Forth from the womb of night;
And in that great deliverance
Revealed a new world at a glance.

Yet oft that living thought is born of death,
Arid the stern land lies—
No springs invisible beneath,
No rain-clouds in the skies;
The martyr's blood, and tears, and toil
Alone may irrigate the soil.

The crimson fountain bubbles in deep gloom,
The funeral pyre's a-glow,
And all round the yawning tomb
The harvest 'gins to grow.
Lo! forth the sturdy reapers come
To shout the welcome Harvest Home!

The sickle sheathed, the crop is gathered in
And garnered in the brain;
Not all the kings who victories win
May root it out again;
Nor check the spread, through years unknown,
Of future harvests to be sown.

"Summer is Ended."

To think that this meaningless thing was ever a rose,
Scentless, colourless *this!*
Will it ever be thus (who knows?)
Thus with our bliss,
If we wait till the close?

Though we care not to wait for the end, there comes the end
Sooner, later, at last,
Which nothing can mar, nothing mend:
And end locked fast,
Bent we cannot re-bend.

Christ on the Waters.

A SERMON,

BY THE REV. STOPFORD A. BROOKE, M.A.

"And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

"But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

"And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

"And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

"But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I: be not afraid."—MATTHEW xiv., 23-27.

It was the habit of the early Church—as it is always the habit of men who are building up a great religious movement, after the founder of that movement is dead, and his generation passed away—to embody around sayings of his which contain certain aspects of his teaching in a condensed form, their feeling and their thoughts concerning those aspects of his doctrine. And the way in which they usually throw these thoughts into form is in a kind of parable, a symbolic story, partly because their own thoughts are impassioned and seek a poetical form; and partly because such a form is received with emotion by their listeners or readers, and they wish to kindle emotion; and partly because the thoughts, enshrined in this short and attractive form, are more easily remembered and handed down. Such a story is the so-called miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. It took its rise out of sayings of Jesus like this—"I am the

Bread of life." "He that believeth in me shall never hunger." And the Church embodied in it their thought that, small and slight as were the recorded words of Jesus' teaching, yet that their power was such, owing to their quality of life, that they could feed, and, indeed, had fed, thousands. This story, understood as symbolic when it was first preached and taught, passed in a generation or two, and in an uncritical and miracle-believing age, into being accepted as actual fact. As long then as we remain in it, we remain in the unhistorical. But when we pass out of it, and read of the events which precede and follow the story, we touch the historical. It will not matter much whether, at this very time, Christ retired from the press of men, and was followed by a crowd into the wilder country, and, after teaching them the whole day, went apart at night to pray, for we know that these things often happened in his life, and, indeed, they are told of the first day of his preaching at Capernaum. To act in this way was his constant habit, and it illustrates his character.

Again and again, when, wearied out, he had sought for rest and quiet, he resumed his work in a moment at the call of the needy and the sorrowful. No physical pain, no intellectual enjoyment, no desire to indulge in spiritual feelings, were allowed to keep him back from doing that which God had given him to do. And it was done, not as we often do it, with complaint, grudgingly—as if it mattered whether we died a year or two sooner from over-work,—but with ready joy! His heart was in it. The work itself carried with it that ardour which brought forgetfulness of trouble, self-forgetfulness. "My meat and drink is to do the will of my Father in Heaven."

Perhaps it is the deep impression of this self-forgetfulness in his work which makes us feel the sense of extraordinary finish in it. Nothing is omitted, nothing slurred over; the last touches are given to every day of which we have the record, so that each is a finished picture. As much pains is taken with all things as a great artist takes with his work, and that, not for the mere sake of finish, but to satisfy the fervent love of his work, which could not be content till it was made perfect and beautiful. Yes, it is out of the ardour of his love of the labour he did for men that arises finally that impression of beauty in his life which has kindled around it the imagination and the delight of the world.

Here in this story we see, through its creation by the early Church, how deeply this quality in his work had impressed itself upon men. He had been weary—so goes the tale—he had sought rest. Into his solitude pressed the multitude, seeking to be taught. He put away his weariness, his desire for loneliness. All day long he spake to them — comforted, uplifted, redeemed them. When evening fell, his compassion was still unexhausted. Their wants engaged his love, and it was not till the last sufferer had been healed, the last words of tenderness spoken to the woman and the child, the last wearied traveller fed, that he relaxed the string—not till the evening was come was he left alone.

Then, and not till then, the craving for repose which had been mastered, returned, but owing to the repression, with tenfold force. He could not even desire now the presence of his Apostles. He sent them away also with the crowd, and he was at last alone. This is the Son of Man; master of the weaknesses of humanity for the sake of love, strangely, intimately human in the delicate realm of imaginative feeling. For who does not know—and many know it for fully half their lives—how mankind desires silence, the peace of solitude! To have a noiseless hour, to float with thoughts loosened like boats drifting down a flowing stream, whither the quietude will carry us; to hear no more for a time the loud roar of the storm of human life; not to listen to the incessant discussions within ourselves of conscience with temptation, of fear with hope, of the will with duty, of the passions in tempestuous argument, of the memories of the past with the realities of the present or the dreams of the future; to be alone and to lose ourselves;—how deep, how necessary, how impassioned is this desire!

It is dear to our hearts to think that our Master Jesus felt its power. He departed into a mountain apart to pray, and when even was come he was there alone.

When we are driven into solitude by weariness, or by inward trouble, or by the stress of consuming thought—how do we feel our solitude? Sometimes it is by again brooding over that

which has driven us away from men, by recapitulating our sorrow and our wrong; by embodying ourself and asking it to devour us. Sometimes we strive to lose ourselves in work, in plodding viciousness of work; while all the time our trouble underflows the work and never ceases to afflict, so that the work is itself a part of the disease. Work does not then heal the irritation, for it does not get rid of self. Sometimes we turn to excitement, and nourish that within—and all the more for solitude—until we cannot bear at last that it should not take form, and we flash back to life again and make the inner excitement outward. These are the evil or the useless ways of using loneliness. There is but one way of using it well. It is to pass in its hours out of ourselves into union with that which is greater, nobler, more glorious than ourselves—so that we and all our trouble and wrong are lost in reverence, love, and adoration. An hour a day, like that, in which we live wholly disunited from our craving, brooding, stinging, devouring self, borne away on the joy of love, at one with infinite Nature and the eternal love of God, is like a draught of the elixir of life. We return to the world renewed with youth, having won power, with something of the immortal childhood of joy within our hearts, careless of trouble, easy conquerors of wrong, set free from tyrannous thoughts, having slain low-browed and degrading Care.

And this was the use Christ made of solitude. It was thus he lost himself. He went into the stillness of the night, beneath the starlit skies. There the mighty world of thought, which is the life of Nature, the God who thinks therein and instantly takes form to us in all that the senses receive, poured itself into Jesus, and then took him into Himself, so that his soul, restored by this intense communion, felt the deep and silent joy which is more profound than the ocean, and vaster than the skies. Peace and clear air, and pleasant grass were on the hill top; but more peaceful than the stillness of the night, and purer than the air, and more simple and lowly than the flowers of the field, was the heart of Jesus, refreshed by the love of Nature, because he loved it. He had been tired, disturbed, tossed to and fro by the noise of life. Now all was forgotten. The whole eternity of God's creative life, rushing in inconceivable swiftness, but calm from its very speed, entered into his heart, and lulled it into rest.

But this was not all. He drew near not only to God in Nature, but to the Father of his humanity. "He went apart to pray;" not only prayer as supplication, but prayer in its highest sense, speechless communion with his Father; that steady, solitary placing of all his life, and thoughts, and feelings, of all his past and all the future in which he hoped before God; all his cares and desires, hopes and fears, his highest work and his smallest trouble entrusted to his Father, in absolute union of love and faith—until all that was of earth and of the world vanished away from his heart, and the will of God alone became his will, the test of all he might and might not do. This was the ground of his deep serenity in life, of the peace he left as his last legacy to his disciples. This was the quiet sea in which he bathed his soul when the day had been weary and the pressure of trouble great. And he passed back again to the world from his mountain solitude refreshed, and comforted, and made strong—in one word, heard by God and answered. His whole teaching had been misunderstood. We have here recorded that which was a constant element in the thoughts of those who had listened to him; which again and again he heard expressed—the political and worldly cry which beset every prophet of the day. The people would have made him a king. Here, in the deep stillness of night and God, he felt the Presence of One who understood all within him, and who made him more conscious even than before, that the true King of men was he who died for love and who bore witness in obedience to the truth. One touch of that thought, was Peace passing understanding.

All this is fact, and common fact. It happened again and again in the life of Jesus; and it is, though not so deeply, a common experience of mankind, and might, were we but more like Jesus, be the most blessed fact of all our lives. But as we go on with the story, we come upon another miracle, and one as impossible to believe to be fact as the multiplication of the bread. The wind had risen to a storm when the solitary figure moved downwards to the shore and mingled in the darkness. Meantime the disciples on the lake were struggling with the

swelling wind and waves, their boat tossing on the dangerous sea. When suddenly in the dim mist of the coming dawn James came upon them walking on the waters; and they cried out for fear—"It is I," he said, "be not afraid." Their dread was turned into joy, and when they took him into the ship there was a calm.

The moment we cease to believe in a miracle of this kind, the real origin of the story becomes plain. Indeed, for nearly two thousand years men have felt as it were instinctively that origin, and have symbolized this story. The actual miracle has always fallen into abeyance, even in the mouths of the most orthodox, in sermon and hymn and conversation, and what is dwelt on is the spiritual meaning. It is Christ walking over the waves of the troublous world, over the stormy sea of the heart, over the rushing and overwhelming waters of evil and unbelief, which attack the ship of the Church of Christ. Men have always felt that the story was a symbol. And so it was. The little Church, now beginning, after St. Paul's death, when John was near to death, to be tossed with persecution, with the powers of the world rising all around their frail bark in waves of tempest, cried out for fear; and in the third watch of the night—for they expected their Master in a short time—they received comfort from knowing him to be with them as a spirit. They felt him in their hearts; and the peace their Master won by prayer, was theirs also when they prayed. It seemed to their renewed faith that there was calm. The storm of the whole world became as nothing to them. They had taken Christ in the ship of their heart, and they met persecution with unbroken courage.

It was the experience of many a convert at that time. First, struggle against the storm of opposition, then fear and loss of faith, then prayer, then the vision of Jesus, the realization of their Master in their souls, then absolute peace in which they faced, without moving an eyelid, the lions and the fire.

And this, which was the experience of persons, became the experience of the whole Church. It was the most impassioned of all their experiences. As such, it was certain to take form. And it did take form in hymns, and in pictures, and in symbolic tales. The ship of the Church tossing and saved by Christ is one of the earliest of the paintings. We have two forms of this symbolic tale in the Gospels, this and another. Not represented to be fact by those who created it, it passed, like many other stories, into history after a few years. The poem was made prose—but it has always, as I said, re-asserted its origin, even on the lips of those who believed it to be fact. There is scarcely a hymn book which does not show how inevitably every writer on the subject, though he may fully believe the miracle, finds it not natural to his hand, and drifts into Christian symbolism where the subject is at home; and we find ourselves at home in it.

There are many times in our personal life when we labour in the darkness and the storm; when faith seems wrecked; when sorrow has loosened upon us the whole of its torrent, when sin has made so fierce a tempest that we are blind and deaf, and there is nothing left within us but a voiceless prayer to God. Then out of the deepest night we seem to see the quiet figure of Jesus come, walking on the waters that seem to grow still beneath his feet. "It is I," he cries, "be not afraid." We take him into our heart, and his spirit fills it. His faith inspires ours. Like him, we lift our souls to the Father; nay, like him, we feel the Father with us. In spite of ourselves, we believe, and the joy of that deliverance is unspeakable. To sorrow also, as to doubt, he brings his peace, for he brings with him love of others. In passionate love of his love of men which no pain or sorrow lessened, but increased, we find the power which enables us to lose our sorrow in healing the sorrow of the world—and the storm is over, and we have the quiet of his self-forgetful heart.

And even in the deeper storm of sin, to take him into our heart is victory. For he inspires us with the belief with which he so often inspired the sinner upon earth—the belief that God loves us, that He has something yet for us to do; that He will receive our repentance with joy, that He will enable us to live a new life. "Be not afraid, however much thou hast sinned," Christ cries, "only believe thy sins are forgiven thee, live now without sinning." Then the morning breaks, the shadows flee, the sea is calm; with infinite joy we labour to redeem the past, and far off we see the haven where we would be.

Nor is this less true when we look upon the troublous aspect of the world; when the conflict of ideas and desires, numberless as the waves of the sea, is wildest; when we see humanity tossed and tormented like an ocean, lost in the mists of problems that it cannot pierce or scatter, beaten into foam of war by stormy circumstances that seem to come like winds whence it knows not, victimized as it were against its will; when we, made conscious of all that is beyond our easy life, see the dark waters of mankind rained upon by incessant sorrow, leaping fiercely upwards in the infinite restlessness of their doubt, and their despair—and are ready ourselves, in the vision that reveals reality, to feel that there is no hope for men, no God above who loves them—then, as it were, in the third watch of our night, when the dark is deepest and most cold, and we have most eagerly prayed for light, we see Jesus, the Master of the human soul, the ideal of humanity, the firm believer in the Father who through storm educates Mankind, Jesus, who never, for any sin, or crime, or misery, despaired of goodness and life in man, walking with that divine hope and light in his eyes, in the serene power of his faith, over the dark and tumbling sea. That which the early Christians felt who sang this Poem into Fact, we feel. And hope born of the deep impression rises in the heart. We take Christ's hope, Christ's faith, and Christ's life into our souls. The light of heaven seems to shine from far. We believe in the glory of the end. Work springs up anew, and its power. God becomes a reality, and there is a great calm.

Holiday Notes from the Engadine.

In this eager, hurrying, over-driven age, there are crowds of brain-weary men who look forward to August as the Sabbath month of the year. For with August comes—would it came to all—one of God's best gifts to man, a holiday. There is a lull in the mighty clatter of the machinery of life; the great wheels are still, or they turn slowly and quietly. It is something to live for, a whole month under the benediction of quiet, peace and rest. For sight-seeing and change and physical exercise are to many of us not the best part of a holiday after all. What we need is soothing, tranquility, the chance for quiet meditation with nature and our own souls, and above all, *rest*. A great many people never give themselves a chance of finding out how good is perfect rest. They are as eager and as hurried in their holidays as in their work. Rushing about from place to place, resolved to "do" all the guide-book says ought to be done, and not satisfied unless each new day brings its new excitement. They do not know how to rest. It is said that in old Scandinavia there were trolls, or lubber-dwarfs, who were always busy, who never knew what it was to repose. A country fellow employed one of these trolls to assist him in stealing a quantity of wheat from another countryman's barn. "Take a little more, Mr. Troll, take a little more," says the thief; "by-and-by you shall have some rest." So the troll adds to his burden, saying, however, "Rest, rest! what is rest?" Off they go, the pair of them, carrying heavy loads of the stolen corn. When they are at a safe distance from the scene of their theft, they sit down for a rest. "Oh!" says the troll, "if I had only known how good rest is I would have brought away the whole barn!"

It was in search of rest as well as change I went to the Engadine. It is true there is no enjoying the Engadine without a good deal of physical exercise, but the tramping that is necessary is quite compatible with that delicious mental quiet, which no committee meetings, no engagements, no afternoon calls, no duty of sermon-making can disturb. Rest comes with freedom from the ordinary environments of daily life, with new sights and sounds, with the admission of new trains of thought, and, above all, from immediate contact with the largeness, the liberty, the purity, and the grave simplicities of nature. And I do not know where better these things can be found than in the Engadine.

The Engadine is perhaps the finest of the high mountain valleys of Switzerland. It starts at Maloja, 6000 feet above the sea level, and runs for sixty miles, until it reaches the Austrian Tyrol. Great hills, covered with soft pine woods, clothe it on either side; behind these, on the western boundary, rise the snow-peaks and green glaciers of the Bernina Alps. Innumerable smaller valleys run right and left out of this greater one, which is scarcely ever more than a mile wide, and through

which the emerald waters of the swift flowing Inn make their way to the sea. The dryness, keenness, and purity of its atmosphere have made the Engadine a health resort for asthma and all lung diseases. But people with any touch of heart disease should consult their doctors before venturing so high. For many the air is too rarified, they cannot sleep, and the strain put upon the heart is too much. Two days after I walked over the Julier Pass, 7500 feet, a clergyman, full of life and gaiety, without a word of warning, fell down dead at his companion's feet. The unwonted exertion in that fine, stimulating air brought to light an unsuspected weakness of the heart. The local doctors generally advise that the first two or three days should be spent quietly, to accommodate the organs to the new atmospheric conditions. After that the most strenuous exertion is perfectly safe.

Many people have quite a mistaken notion of the dangers to be encountered in a holiday among the high Alps. They are startled by the fatal accidents that occur to guides and climbers, and they think that these are the normal features of Alpine excursions. The fact is, all the glory, wonder, and beauty of Switzerland may be seen and enjoyed with no more danger than is to be met in ascending Snowdon or Skiddaw. It is not the search for beauty which leads to accidents, but the ambition to conquer the difficult, and the love of that excitement which arises from risking the dangerous. Mountaineering as a test of muscular vigour and endurance, or as a form of exciting sport, with the spice of a considerable element of danger, is one thing, and, I daresay, may be amply justified. But the mountaineering that is necessary to the full appreciation of the loveliness of the Alps is a comparatively simple affair. For sheer beauty nothing can exceed the Alps as seen from the safety of Schauffhausen or the terrace at Berne. From either spot the great peaks may be seen now clear as crystal, sharp on the pure horizon sky, and now dreamy as the walls of a far-away heaven, a revelation of beauty felt for evermore in every noble impulse, and every thought that has in it help or peace. And to this nothing more is anywhere added by risking a broken neck.

In the Engadine you have the maximum of beauty with the minimum of danger. Of course, if you must have prodigious difficulties, and hair-breadth escapes, and daring adventures, and risky shaves of life, you can find them in plenty. Piz Bernina, Piz Roseg, and half-a-dozen other peaks offer as many fatal chances as any other spot in Switzerland. But to enjoy the beauty of a mountain range it is not necessary to climb its highest peaks. More moderate heights give just as fine points of view, while the play of colour on the snow fields—ruby, crimson, and rose—is far better seen from one of the lesser hills opposite a great range. In the Engadine, I contented myself, as my highest climbs, with the Schafberg and Piz Languard, one 9500 and the other 10,500 feet high. In both cases a perfectly plain path leads to the top; no guide is wanted, the element of danger is sadly to seek, and there is nothing to endure but the fatigue of a long zig-zag walk up-hill. You take your lunch with you, and start early and make a day of it; and if you have the power of appreciating Nature in her grander moods, your cup of happiness is full. The first two miles of the climb are through lovely pine-woods, with their delicate scent and their wealth of flowers beneath. Then you leave the trees behind you and get out on to the native rocks. By and by the grass disappears, the flowers become scarcer, the air grows cooler, and you cross a patch of snow. After three or four hours you stand on the top, the centre of a magnificent circle of peaks. All around you they lift themselves up, silent, impassive; some covered with vast fields of snow; some glittering with glaciers flowing down their sides; some gaunt and naked rock; while below you trace the course of three or four green valleys, with their streams running through them like silken threads of blue, and in the distance the four sapphire lakes of the Upper Engadine carrying the eye over the Maloja. But it is cold up there—too cold to eat your luncheon with any comfort—so you descend 500 feet, till you find a great rock that shelters you from the wind, and there you take your modest meal in full view of the whole Bernina range.

Coire is the usual starting point for the Engadine, and there are two routes you can travel by diligence, one over the Albula pass, and one over the Julier. The distance from Coire to Samaden, the posting centre of the Engadine, is 54 miles over the Julier, which the diligence accomplishes in 14 hours. As I hate all diligences, and am

a firm believer in my own legs, I sent on my portmanteau by post, and covered the distance in three days easy walking. The pleasure of that walk will not soon fade from memory's tablets. On the first day I was accompanied by four English Catholic priests, who toiled along in their heavy clerical costume under the blazing sun as if they were doing penance. They were pleasant fellows, although fearfully narrow. I quoted a line of Tennyson apropos of something we passed, when one of them expressed his regret that Tennyson should have been such an unbeliever! I made a vigorous protest, with the only result of arousing my neighbour's suspicion of my own soundness in the faith.

From Coire to the top of the Julien Pass the road ascends 5,500 feet, passing through the most picturesque scenery. On the third morning of my walk a heavy snowstorm came on, enveloping the top of the pass in provoking mist, so that little could be seen until we dropped down the other side to Silvaplana. The road to Samaden from Silvaplana runs through St. Moritz, where the fashionable love to congregate. It has a kursaal, baths, a band, a promenade, several big hotels, and all the accompaniments for people who have more money than brains. Every other person you meet is either a Baron, or an "Altissimo," or a Serene Highness. The ladies vie with each in the number of extravagant costumes they can show off in one day: there is a good deal of mild gambling, and a strong flavour of Parisian boulevards. It is the kind of place a lover of nature and quiet shuns as the devil. Happily there are plenty of restful villages and hotels in the Engadine where health and tranquility, the love of beauty and exercise, count for more than fashion and display. I found in Samaden and Sils Maria good quiet hotels, sensible company, moderate prices, and that healthy disregard of conventionalites, not to say positive Bohemianism, which adds so much to the charm of a holiday. Samaden is a beautifully-situated village, three miles from Pontrsina, and the same distance from St. Moritz. All the walks and sights of those more famous places are within easy distance of Samaden, while you are out of the fashionable racket. There I spent eight days, taking the longer excursions every other day, and idling in the pine woods on the alternate days. In this way I went up the Schafberg and Piz Languard, visited the Bernina Pass and hospice, the Albula Pass, and the Roseg and Morteratsch Glaciers. The day on the Roseg Glacier is never to be forgotten. A shower in the early morning had laid the dust, and was followed by ten hours of the most brilliant sunshine. The walk up the Roseg Valley—five miles—is a delightful expedition in itself, and ends at a little inn in front of the glaciers. I arrived there early in order to be able to do the glacier excursion. The glacier comes down from Piz Roseg in two ice-cataracts, divided by a great mass of rock, and uniting again at the bottom. You pass round the lower slopes of one arm of the glacier, ascend the dividing rocks, come down on the other arm of the glacier, and back to the inn by the Mortelhut and Alp Ota. It is a perfectly safe excursion, and one of rare attractiveness. All day long a great panorama of snow-peaks is unrolled before you, shining in the sun like masses and wedges of silver. I need hardly say that after such a round you will eat your dinner with a good appetite and sleep the sleep of the just!

But of all the desirable places to stay at in the Engadine commend me to Sils Maria. It is five miles from the more fashionable Maloja, situated on a grassy slope between two lakes of heavenly blue, a little off the high road, and at the entrance of the valleys that lead to the Fex and Fedoz Glaciers. Here I spent ten happy days, and thither my thoughts return whenever the Engadine is mentioned. For me, the Alps and their people, alike beautiful in their snow and their humanity, have never been more perfectly embodied than at Sils Maria. The host of the "Alpenrose" could not give me a bed in the hotel, but found me a room in a Swiss farmer's house—a large room, spotlessly clean, with prints of Luther and Melancthon on the walls, and two shelves of books containing, among other treasures, a complete set of Goethe's works. It was much more interesting than the regulation bedroom of the hotel, and I had the advantage of making the acquaintance of a simple, hard-working, yet cultured Swiss household. A great St. Bernard dog lay outside my door all night, and in the morning there was a scramble all over the house of St. Bernard puppies. Nothing could exceed the kindness and courtesy of Herr

Tragen and his wife. I won my way to the hearts of the children by sundry small sticks of chocolate, so that when it came to parting there was a dismal howl. Sils Maria is a pretty, well-to-do village, with endless walks for those who cannot go far among the woods that clothe the low hills at the back, with glacier views to be had in twenty minutes, and plenty of climbing for those who want more active exercise. While it has nothing that can be compared with the wonderful view of the Jungfrau range at Mürren, it exceeds that charming place in the number and variety of its easily accessible walks, while its situation between two fairy-like lakes gives it a character all its own. Nowhere have I seen the Alpine flowers in greater profusion In the woods, among the rocks of the valleys, right up to the lips of the glaciers the flowers crowd and cluster.

There too one breathes what I think must be the finest air on God's earth. No pestiferous marsh; no sewer gas; no chemical fumes; no factory smoke; but an air keen and pure, at once warmed by the sun and cooled by the glaciers; exhilarating as champagne, scented with new-mown hay, and the breath of pine woods—a divine air in which all things seem possible. I should recommend it as a perfect remedy for Pessimism!

JOSEPH WOOD.

Notes on News.

The Grindelwald conference has been making itself more than usually ridiculous. Ostensibly founded to promote the re-union of Christendom, it industriously sows the seeds of discord and division. At the first session, some three or four years ago, it was agreed that the preliminary step towards bringing about Christian union must be a new and stringent act of exclusion. Over the doors of the re-united Christian church are to be inscribed the words: "No Unitarians admitted by the Grindelwald gate into the kingdom of heaven." It is certainly a startling way to begin re-union by casting out, and the fulmination of new anathemas. Mr. Hugh Price Hughes has especially distinguished himself by his bitterness towards Unitarians. He evidently regards men like Stopford Brooke and Dr. Martineau as moral lepers, unworthy to kneel in the same church or breathe the same atmosphere as a Methodist class-leader. Suspected himself of more than one heresy, he

> Compounds for sins he is inclined to
> By damning those he has no mind to.

But at the conference just ended, Mr. Hughes out-did himself. The subject under discussion, between the intervals of climbing and dining, was the possibility of an educational concordat, which should unite all parties and all churches, putting an end to the theological and ecclesiastical strifes which centre round our elementary schools. According to the *Times* report, Mr. Hughes submitted the following as a treaty of peace. "He wished to propose the following concordat:—1. That the Church of England should make its day schools truly national schools, free from denominational bias. 2. That, on the other hand, Nonconformists should sanction the teaching of the Apostles' Creed in all the schools of the country, subject, of course, to a conscience clause. 3. That all teachers that undertook religious teaching should be definitely trained in historical Christianity, by which he meant the Christianity of the Apostles' Creed. 4. They must tell Unitarians, Atheists, Agnostics, Jews, Mohammedans, and Theosophists, and any others who objected to such a proposal, that the majority of Englishmen desired their children to have a Christian education, that they were sufficiently protected by the conscience clause, and that they should not be permitted to interfere with a great national system of education."

Here is combustible matter enough! Mr. Hughes' concordat is an attempt to put out the fires of educational controversy by pouring on them a plentiful supply of petroleum. No wonder his proposal received at once the commendation of Mr. Athelstan Riley. Its insolent reference to all who do not accept the Apostles' Creed as an infallible summary of Christian truth, must have been entirely to that gentleman's mind. The suggestion is a surrender and a betrayal. It is to the effect, that if Anglicans will level down the denominational teaching in their schools to the Apostles' Creed, Board schools should be compelled to level up to that line, that so we may have a homogeneous system all over the country, the Board schools being captured for orthodoxy

by Mr. Riley and his friends. Furthermore, all teachers in Church and Board schools alike are to be specially trained to teach this creed in a manner which will commend itself to Catholic priests, Anglican vicars, and—Mr. Price Hughes!

Dr. Clifford and Mr. Hughes are personal friends, and therefore we read with additional relish Dr. Clifford's warning against taking the proposal too seriously—"as though the dialectical clatter of the Grindelwald word-mill were a hand-to-hand encounter with the real problems of our national life." He tells us that while the Grindelwald debates are "magnificent" they are not "business." We quite agree. Yet, on a greater authority than Dr. Clifford's, we have it that a little fire may kindle a great matter. The squib of some mischievous school-boy may burn down a palace. It is just as well to stamp out such dangerous stuff as quickly as possible.

It is not now to the purpose to discuss the truth or untruth of the particular clauses of the Apostles' Creed. Suffice it to say that in spite of its apparent simplicity, it is one of the most objectionable formularies that could be brought forward for such a purpose. Its very title is an offence against veracity and historical truth, since the Apostles had no more to do with it than with the 39 articles or with the American constitution. The pretty legend that each of the twelve apostles contributed one of its clauses is now known to be as baseless as one of Grimm's fairy tales. No trace of this creed can be found until the eighth century. Moreover, how the floodgates of hot discussion would be opened on such phrases as "He descended into hell," "I believe in the resurrection of the body," "the Holy Catholic Church." But there are two preliminary objections to the adoption of Mr. Hughes' concordat, which may save us all trouble in this connection as to the contents of the Apostles' Creed.

In the first place, this proposal would establish and endow a new State Church. What Mr. Hughes asks is that the national schools, paid for out of public funds, should be converted into theological seminaries, where theological students shall endeavour to convey to children's minds ideas, terms, and distinctions, about which theological doctors are wrangling all the world over. To consent to that would be to give up everything for which Nonconformists have contended in their long dispute with the Established Church. The creed of a section of the public is to be rewarded and promulgated at the expense of all; the State is to step out of its province, and take the spiritual life of the children and the nation under its direction; religion is to be made a matter of the repetition of formularies, and the duty of the church to the souls of these little ones is to be handed over from their slack hands to a Government department, which may be presided over by an Agnostic. All the evils of a State church are to be reproduced in the State schools.

In the second place this proposal re-enacts a vicious and immoral custom which, ousted from the universities, is to take refuge in our schools, *i.e.*, the application of theological tests to educational office. Such tests are a continual temptation to lying and hypocrisy. Men are bribed to swallow creeds in which they do not believe by the prospect of employment. Tests always have this demerit, they never keep out the men it is desirable to keep out—the men of no conscience. It is honest, upright men who are excluded; dishonest men, weak men, needy men, easy-going men, find no difficulty in digesting any number of tests. But it would be a strange thing that, having abolished tests in the universities, we should re-impose them in the public elementary schools—that, having thrown open professorships to scholarship merit and ability, irrespective of theology, we should close the public school teacher's profession with a test.

These considerations alone render Mr. Hughes' concordant impossible. A more preposterous, a more mischievous proposal was never made. It would be, if adopted, fatal to sound education, to religious liberty, and to the independence of the teaching profession. Mr. Hughes may repair to Canossa if he pleases, but let it be clearly understood that the Christian churches of this country will not follow him on such a pilgrimage of betrayal.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Jack and Ned.

When the ship is but a speck
To the landsman's feeble eye,
Sailors, lying on the deck,
Feel at home with sea and sky:
When the land's no longer seen,
Light of heart the sailor is;
Nothing sea and sky between
But that gallant ship of his!

Pretty Jack, with curly hair,
Sunny eye and saucy smile,
Heart to love, and soul to dare,
Is the darling of the ship!
Mother's pet at mother's knee
Only yesterday it seems;
Now a sailor-boy is he,
Mother sees him but in dreams!

Such a dashing little rogue!
Such a loving little coax!
With a tiny touch of brogue
To enhance his funny jokes;
With his childhood's innocence,
And the colour of the skies
And a charming impudence
Lighting his audacious eyes!

Jack is ailing—all deplore!
Jack is ill—and joy has fled!
Jack is dying—ah, no more!
Yes, alas! for—Jack is dead!
Grey old heads hang down in grief,
O'er rough cheeks tears trickle fast;
Strapping oaths give no relief—
So they turn to prayer at last.

Then an aged seaman said,
"Let me die instead of him;
Take a worn-out craft instead
Of a wherry, tight and trim:
All my spars are getting loose—
Ropes and rigging are not taut;
Ned is useless, Jack's of use—
Give the thing a moment's thought!"

Is Jack only in a faint,
That his blue eyes open wide
At this rough-and-ready saint
Who, to save him, would have died?
In amazement all start back;
How they look and listen, too—
"Ned, don't die," says little Jack,
"Who'll masthead me if you do?"

So both lived to play their parts;
Death retreated from them far;
Sailors have such tender hearts,
And such simple creatures are!
And I doubt, when all is said,
Which shows best in white and black,
An old sailor like our Ned,
Or a sailor-boy like Jack!

In a cottage that I know
Both are welcome as the sun;
One, because it must be so—
T'other for the sake of one.
In a mother's heart and home
Ned may to the best aspire—
I have often seen him come
To his corner by the fire.

If you ask the truth of Jack—
Did he faint, or was he dead?
Was his little soul brought back
By the earnest prayer of Ned?
What can tell us?—who can say?
Answer none this earth may give;
We but know that Ned did pray—
We but know that Jack did live!

Cousin Carrie's Kitten.

Moses was born at a farm house where I was lodging, and he was a very small, weak, and puny kitten indeed. The reason that he was so far from plump seeemed to be that, though the farmer's wife always put down lots of milk and bread under the kitchen table for the pussies, she had not time to wait and see that this small thing had its meals, and so it was pushed aside by the other stronger cats, and by the dogs, who, though they were never unkind to it, wanted to get a drink of milk themselves. I almost believe that this little puss had begun to think that kittens must learn to live without eating and drinking; for it was very uncomplaining and meek about going without food; never cross to the other creatures, always in a good temper. It was fond of playing all by itself up and down the staircase, and its favourite game was to make pounces at people's petticoats as they whisked by. There it would skip and prance and scamper, a little lonely thing, for its mother was dead, and it had no sister and brother kitties. But one day a sad misfortune happened to the kitten. As it was running in at the back kitchen door the farmer trod upon it by accident with his heavy iron-shod boot. Poor wee pussy! Though its mouth was crushed and bleeding, and one little paw hung down limp and helpless, it uttered no cry, but took the pain quite quietly, and went to creep into one of its favourite corners under the stairs, that it might suffer in silence. I found it there,

crouching down, such a patient unhappy little bundle, and carrying it into my room, I put it on a soft cushion. Kitty looked up gratefully at me, and began to purr, as if to say, "Is this what every kitty must learn to bear as well as being hungry?"

For many days little Moses (how he came to be so called I don't know) stayed where he was. I fed him with nice drops of cream out of a spoon, and when the poor sore mouth was better, with small bits from my own plate. He not only got better, but began to grow fat and round as a little ball. His young bones were soft, and though his face had an odd look, which it still keeps, as if the jaw had been squeezed on one side, nothing was broken. Soon he ran about again as well as ever, and sturdily refused to let me out of his sight. When I went back to the town he went with me, in a basket, and here he is now. Moses comes as regularly as the clock to get his share of what is going at meal times, turning up punctually at the right time, wherever he may have been a moment before. How he finds out is a wonder, since he carries no watch. Though more than middle-aged, he dearly loves fun; but nowadays he expects me to share it. His favourite toy is—you would never guess what—a shadow!

So soon as Moses has finished his supper, he gravely stalks in front of me to the nearest place where a shadow can be made to flicker up and down the passage wall, or across the floor. He leaps and dances up, trying to catch this as long as he likes, and if I am out, he gets the servant to do it, though he prefers me. When he has had enough of it, he suddenly turns his back and runs off to his bed by the fire, with a scornful toss of the head, which means "I wonder that we aren't ashamed of ourselves, a couple of old folk, to be wasting our time in such nonsense!" There is a little house in the garden, which was made for a dog. Into this Moses retreats when he is out at night, and finds it too cold. He has learnt how to open the door with one paw, and when he is inside it shuts of itself, so that he is safe from any cats, his enemies, who might try to get at him. Moses is a calm cat, and not fond of battle. In the morning it is very funny to see him fling the door open from within, and then shoot himself out like an arrow, for fear that it should bang before he is clear of it, and catch the tip of his tail. There is not a more comfortable-looking cat anywhere than this puss, once such a sad half-starved little kitty; and the spirits of Moses are so good that, though he likes his victuals well enough, I believe he would rather go without his supper any day than miss his shadow dance.

COUSIN CARRIE.

Could the history of opinions be fully written, it would be seen how large a part in human proceedings the love of conformity, or rather the fear of non-conformity, has occasioned. It has triumphed over all other fears; over love, hate, pity, sloth, anger, truth, pride, comfort, self-interest, vanity, and maternal love.

Saturday Night.

Placing the little hats all in a row,
Ready for church on the morrow, you know;
Washing wee faces and little black fists,
Getting them ready and fit to be kissed;
Putting them into clean garments and white—
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Spying out holes in the little worn hose,
Laying by shoes that are worn through the toes,
Looking o'er garments so faded and thin—
Who but a mother knows where to begin?
Changing a button to make it look right—
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Calling the little ones all 'round her chair,
Hearing them lisp forth their soft evening prayer,
Telling them stories of Jesus of old,
Who loves to gather the lambs to his fold;
Watching, they listen with childish delight—
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Creeping so softly to take a last peep,
After the little ones all are asleep;
Anxious to know if the children are warm,
Tucking the blanket round each little form;
Kissing each little face, rosy and bright—
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Kneeling down gently beside the white bed,
Lowly and meekly she bows down her head,
Praying as only a mother can pray,
"God, guide and keep them from going astray."

The Club Theory of the Church.

[An American newspaper has been discussing the question, "Is a church a club?" The following article from its columns may be profitably considered by some of our English churches, in which the club theory is too prominent.]

"The idea a church has of its mission will very largely shape its efforts, and measure its success. Thousands of Christians regard the church as they do a club—an organisation for the mutual benefit of its members, and for the gathering of congenial spirits. When strangers come among them the first question is whether they are of the kind wanted in their circle. If not they are left out, not by any rule or any church action, but by something more potent than either. Instead of living for humanity, they aim at gathering a pleasant social circle, congenial to their own tastes. The old Baptist deacon, who told an unwelcome applicant that 'there was no vacancy in their church just then,'

was only a little more frank than usual, and expressed in words what others only feel and express in deeds. Of course there can be no rule excluding undesirable applicants. Rules of such a nature would not look well on the book. But there are more ways than one to London, and there can be cold looks that shall be harder to face than the lions in the pilgrim's path. Strangers are sometimes received into such a circle after a proper probation. After being kept in the entry, and sitting on back seats, and being looked at through opera glasses sufficiently long, they are sometimes gradually taken into social fellowship. Christian fellowship is not of much account in such a church, and one would hardly go there for that.

Of course there is a kind of power in this. For many people select their church on this very principle. They inquire about its social attractions, the social position of its members, the elegance of its house, and the comfort of its seats. They are far more anxious about its social standing than its piety; more solicitous about its refinement than about its Christian activity. Of course, true refinement and culture do not hurt a church, but are a help. Every man is bound to secure all the refinement he can, and every church is bound to elevate and refine as well as to Christianise. But there is a mobbish assumption of culture and refinement, which is a burlesque on the genuine article. It puts on a great many airs, and talks a great deal about "good society" and "social standing." It is very careful to have everybody understand the grade of society to which it belongs. It likes to stand of by itself and wrap its robes close around it. Like Pendennis at Oxbridge, it would take a "perfumed bath" after mingling with any of the lowly. It is very particular as to who walks by its side in the street, and as to who sits next to it in church. It is very much afraid of being confounded with common people. It needs some badge to distinguish it. Just as the painter found it necessary to write, "This is the bear, and this is the cow." It makes acquaintances with great caution, and is always afraid of losing caste, and of being contaminated. And the fear has a good foundation. Paste jewels are easily tarnished.

But true merit is always modest and always confident. It never thinks of contamination or confusion. It never fears being contaminated by its associations. The acid never spots the gold. It is the plated ware that must be protected so carefully.

Such a spirit as this curses and blights many a church. We may call it the "club-house theory" of church organisation. The great aim of the members is to make the church pleasant and congenial to themselves, and to draw in those who will be an addition to their circle. They seem to feel that the church is their own, and that they have a perfect right to shape it to their own tastes, and use it for their own advantage. They will talk of the impertinence of all outside criticism. "May not a man do what he will with his own?"

But the church is not a private enclosure if it be a church at all. It exists for doing God's work in the world, not for providing a pleasant weekly entertainment for those who can afford its fees. The church is not an organisation for mutual admiration, comfort, and help, or even for mutual spiritual growth alone. It is for humanity, it is for God: it exists to promote the interests of the kingdom of heaven. Its members have put themselves under Christ's law of service. There must all God's children be welcome as to their Father's house. And there all who wish to return to God must find an open door and a ready welcome. Without asking about his pedigree, or his social standing, or his purse, the church must receive even publicans and sinners to its cheer and fellowship.

The presence of a noble nature, generous in its wishes, ardent in its charity, changes the lights for us; we begin to see things again in their larger quieter masses, and to believe that we too can be seen and judged in the wholeness of our character.

To speak truth, a man must not only have that martial courage which goes out, with sound of drum and trumpet, to do and suffer great things; but that domestic courage which compels him to utter small-sounding truths in spite of present inconvenience and outraged sensitiveness or sensibility.

Fat People.

Fat people cannot be exactly called the "salt of the earth," but they are fairly entitled to be considered its sugar. There is a certain sweetness, or at least mellowness, about healthful and cheerful obesity which spreads on all around the sense that life is, after all, not a bad thing. What optimism is to the intellect the tendency to grow fat is to the body, and the mental and material characters mostly harmonise in the same individual. There is the same generous power of assimilation applicable alike to the food which the man eats and the facts he observes. He chooses of both what agrees with him, and does not swallow foul indigestible fruit, nor notice the more bitter realities of human existence.

He does not "quarrel with his bread and butter" in the literal or metaphorical sense of the words. Not for him is the theory that "Nothing is new, and nothing is true, and it don't matter."

He believes in the solid earth, else how could he tread on it? Gloomy doubts, dark suspicions, and evil fears he throws off by the healthful action of his mental epidermis. According to his vocation in life, he is a "jolly tar," a fox-hunter with a "view halloa" capable of wakening the dead, or a host as mellow as his ale. You will not find him writing saturnine reviews, or preaching after the manner of the Rev. Dr. Brimstone, or joining secret associations for the purpose of blowing up obnoxious workmen or shooting superfluous Emperors. The people who work for the female franchise complain that they can never induce a fat man seriously to entertain the subject of the wrongs of women. "Whatever is," he is inclined to think, "is right." His cruse of the oil of gladness is always moderately full, and it is not his specialty to pry into the empty vessels of his neighbours. He feels like that grand optimist, Marcus Aurelius, who viewed the panorama of life from the rather advantageous position of the throne of the world, "That fate has done well by him and by everybody." The very faults of a fat man are less acerbate than those of other people. There is a certain jovial ease about him which makes it hard to view them with strict severity. As Falstaff said of himself, he has "more flesh than other men, therefore more frailty." It is to be expected there should be some relaxation of discipline for people who can never, figuratively or otherwise, gird up their loins very tightly. Then there is a notion, too, which is only common justice, that a fat man has a good deal to bear, and must not have needless burdens thrust upon him. Nobody could expect him to take the same sort of trouble for his neighbours that might be looked for from an active, fussy, little man; and if the fat man does get in a passion now and then, there is a certain fitness of things about his portentous wrath, a rotundity in his angry expressions, and a security that the mere force of gravitation will cause the disturbance shortly to subside, which almost reconcile us to the offence. No fear from him of long-cherished spite and hidden bitterness, and vengeance nursed in the recesses of his capacious person. He could not be the man he is were there any gall among his secretions; and every superfluous pound of flesh on his form is a public guarantee that he bears no rancour in his soul. Generally the fat man is somewhat selfish. It is not by attending to other people's affairs that he has accumulated that abundance of adipose matter. He finds in himself always, as Rochefoucauld says, "Sufficient force to endure the ills of other men." To the evils they suffer his eyes have a tendency gently to close. A maxim for which he has much favour is that "Charity begins at home." He is fond of his wife and children—a fat man is generally married—and likes to see them looking cheerful, especially at meal-times; but he does not fret himself very grievously when things go wrong with them, unless they die, and of that evil the fat man has peculiar horror.

He hates the idea of severance between the soul and the comfortable body. The epitaph on an obese gentleman—

> "Reader, whoe'er thou art, oh! tread not hard,
> For Tadlow lies all over this churchyard"—

might be appropriate to him, but shocks his feelings. No fat man ever committed suicide, nor yet, that ever we heard of, any crime liable to capital punishment. Look at the lean wretches in Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors, and say if there be not inductive proof that to commit murder it is needful to have a bad complexion and no superfluous corpulence!

All these circumstances being taken into consideration, fat people may themselves think they have less than justice done them in the world. Ought they not to be looked upon as the pillars of the Commonwealth—the solid ballast of the ship of State, liable to no sudden shiftings? Is not their very presence in a country a credit to it, a sort of permanent itinerant humane cattle show, proving how plentiful is the food, how wholesome the air, how settled and dignified all the conditions of existence in that favoured land? When we look at countries where fat men are rare, as in France or America, do we not see that there the population must be seething in political discontent or struggling with unseemly haste for the possession of dollars? Revolutions and civil wars are only natural occurences amidst lean and lanky people. A nation whose Registrar-general could announce that the average weight of adult manhood had reached thirteen stone, would infallibly repose in eternal peace and prosperity, and sing the "Roast Beef of Old England" to the end of time instead of those thin and restless jigs, "Yankee Doodle" and "Partant pour la Syrie." But, alas! instead of bestowing due honour and offering appropriate decorations, such, for instance, as those which are hung on prize meat at Christmas, to the few living representatives and forerunners of such a millennium, they are treated too often amongst us with most unfitting irreverence. The levity so remote from their appearance is transferred by some inscrutable process to the minds of those who contemplate them; and a man who has nothing to do but to fall on his neighbour's neck to reduce him to a platitude is yet treated by that mere hollow mask of humanity as if his immensity of solid flesh was the natural target of scorn. A joke is understood to be ten times a joke when launched against a person more than forty inches in girth. To be obliged to share a seat in a public conveyance with one of those calm and bland and generally cleanly fellows is looked upon as an adventure to be hereafter narrated among the titters of an audience, unworthy—in point of weight—to tie those shoes which Mr. Banting in his earlier and better days found it impossible to fasten for himself.

Nothing really heroic, much less sentimental, is accepted from a fat person. As to the poetry of life, a man who happens to have a tendency to superfluous flesh has nothing to do but to abjure it from the first. Think how Gibbon, the most majestic of historians, has been laughed at for a century for going down on his knees to make love, and finding it impossible to get up till the lady rang for the footman to help him.

No! among the neglected heroes, the misunderstood glories of our race, fat people must certainly be reckoned; but, in spite of public ingratitude they have even now a measure of reward and a source of ineffable consolation. Their rights cannot wholly be ignored even by the lighest and most frivolous of mankind.

When a fat man enters a drawing room there is no ignoring his presence, he is never overlooked in a crowd. The mistress of the house must perforce attend to the object which for the moment fills her door-way.

Then, as the obese "party" proceeds into the room, and seeks, perhaps modestly, to seat himself or herself on a small ordinary chair, with what alacrity of courtesy does the hostess rush to prevent the hazardous experiment! "Oh! don't sit on that uncomfortable seat, Mrs. Adipose, do pray, try this large arm-chair by the fire." Mrs. Adipose smiles sweetly at this version of "friend, go up higher," knowing perfectly well that tender alarm for the cane articles of furniture, rather than concern for her own ease, has prompted the removal. But she seats herself necessarily with some stir and dignity on the solid throne by the hearth, and the result is that for the whole evening she occupies the place of honour, and is insensibly treated by everybody as the first lady in the room. After all, as Miss Thackeray confesses, "Size has a dignity of its own,"—a claim to honour which it is vain to contest; and when the fat man rises to his proper and becoming eminence, and takes his seat on the Woolsack, the Bench of Bishops, or the Treasury Bench, then all mankind recognise the natural fitness of things, and greet the new dignitary with the Eastern benediction, "May your shadow never be less."

FRANCES POWER COBB.

Troubles are like babies, they grow bigger by nursing. But babies are not therefore heavy troubles.

To the Treasurer of the
Graham Street Protestant
Dissenting Charity Schools,
Beechenhurst,
Selly Hill,
Birmingham.

Please add my name to the List of Subscribers to this Institution for the sum of £ : :

Signature .....

Address .....

Date .....

Annual Subscribers of 21s. are entitled to nominate one girl per annum for admittance into the School, to be elected by the votes of all subscribers.

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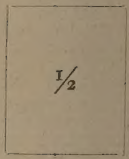

JNO. S. NETTLEFOLD,
Beechenhurst,
Selly Hill,
Birmingham.

Graham Street Protestant Dissenting Charity School.

In these enlightened days, when unsectarian education occupies a foremost place in the programmes of legislators and philanthropists, it may interest some of our readers to have a short account of a school which was established in Birmingham nearly a century before the first Board School, and is still doing as good work as the day it was started. It is true the children of the poorest can now obtain their education free at a Board School, but the Graham Street School is not only intended to educate, but also to board, clothe, and train girls for domestic service, and the number of poor children which it annually receives and sends forth into the world, ready and able to earn an honest livelihood—where there is so much demand for their services—is a sufficient testimony to its use. The Blue-coat schools are busy in the same line; but in the year 1760, when this school was founded, children of dissenting parents were excluded from enjoying their benefits, owing to the religious test imposed. In consequence of this, a few benevolent dissenters founded a school for girls and boys, where it should be the aim to instil virtuous and religious principles into the children, without enforcing any dogmas. Things have changed much since then, and the narrow bigotry of former years has largely disappeared, but Graham Street School still finds a wide field for its labours, and offers its benefits regardless of the differences of religious opinion; the one thing it lacks to enable it to perform its proper amount of useful work is a wider financial support. The need for it is as pressing as ever, since the Blue-coat schools still enforce their religious test.

Boys and girls were at first received here, but that was soon found impracticable, and since 1813 the school has been exclusively devoted to girls. Its special claim to support is, that without pauperisation it enables many girls of poor and needy parents to be educated and trained to earn their own living in an honest and useful way, which might otherwise be beyond their powers. Nor are they lost sight of after leaving school, for, having found them a situation, the ladies of the committee still take an interest in their welfare, and friendly relations exist for many years between the school and its old scholars.

In 1791, the school was removed from Old Meeting Street, where it originated, to Park Street.

In 1840, it was again transplanted, this time to Graham Street, where it has remained ever since.

In 1849, an important change was effected by discharging the housemaid, so that the girls should do the house-work themselves, thereby making their training more practical, and also reducing the expenses of the school. In 1869 this idea was still further developed by furnishing a part of the school like a private house, which gives better practice than only cleaning the somewhat bare rooms of an ordinary charity school. The girls also make their own dresses, and in fact are carefully taught everything necessary to thoroughly fit them for their future occupation.

In 1875 a plan was formed to utilise any large donations received as an Income Auxiliary Fund, so as to enable the committee to fill the 52 beds in the School, and this attained its object for a few years, but, owing to the falling off in donations and legacies, the annual income from this source has been diminished from £163 in 1875 to £80 in 1894. In consequence of this and of the corresponding decrease in the subscription list the committee has been obliged to once more reduce the number of girls to 42. This step is all the more to be regretted in face of the fact that last year the matron received 92 (ninety-two) applications for servants.

When the first Board School was started in Birmingham, many subscribers thought the maintenance of Graham Street School was no longer necessary, but they soon found the Board Schools could not supply the daily influence of a good home, which is so important a factor in preparing the children to become efficient members of society.

The School is almost entirely dependent on voluntary subscriptions, as its income from investments only amounts to about £250, which is totally inadequate to its support.

Many old and honoured names have disappeared from our subscription list, and we appeal to the present generation to fill up their places and carry on the good work so ably begun by our predecessors.

Girls are admitted from any part of the United Kingdom, so that non-residence in Birmingham should be no bar to intending subscribers.

We are confident that if its needs could be more widely made known, many generous people, recognising the value of such a broad-minded training, would come to its assistance.

The Treasurer (Mr. J. S. Nettlefold, Beechenhurst, Selly Hill, Birmingham) will receive subscriptions and send further information to anyone who would care for it, and he would like to add that nothing but an increased subscription list can give the committee confidence and enable them to put the school on a sound financial basis.

The committee will welcome any friends who wish to see the good work which is being carried on.

Like most garments, like most carpets, everything has a right side and a wrong side. You can take any joy, and by turning it around find troubles on the other side; or you may take the greatest trouble, and by turning it around find joys on the other side. The gloomiest mountain never casts a shadow on both sides at once, nor does the greatest of life's calamities.

When a man is young, he thinks to reform the world; but when he gets older he is quite satisfied if he can reform himself.

With four qualifications a man may be pretty sure of worldly success; they are—gold in his pockets, silver in his tongue, brass in his face and iron in his heart.

News from the Field.

MIDLAND CHRISTIAN UNION.—On Monday, October 7th, a public meeting will be held in the Church of the Messiah, Birmingham, to give a welcome to the Rev. John Harrison, on commencing his duties as Missionary Agent for the Union. The chair will be taken at eight o'clock by Rev. L. P. Jacks, M.A., and addresses will be given by Mr. Priestley Smith and the Revs. Estlin Carpenter, M A., Enfield Dowson, B.A., Joseph Wood, J. C. Street, and John Harrison. The Autumnal Meetings of the Union will be held at West Bromwich, on Monday, October 28th. (See advt.)

HOLLYWOOD.—On Sunday last, September 15th, the Harvest Festival Services were held at Kingswood Chapel. There was a profuse display of fruit, corn, bread, and vegetables. An abundance of flowers and plants were arranged around the pulpit, communion table, windows, lamps, and doorways. The sermons were preached by the Rev. J. Hardinge Matthews to large congregations. The collections were taken for the benevolent fund, and and amounted to £4 8s. The bread, fruit, and vegetables were afterwards distributed.

KIDDERMINSTER.—Taking his turn on a Sunday afternoon, September 8, in a series of special services in the Brinton Park, the Rev. E. D. P. Evans preached on behalf of the Infirmary to a congregation of between 2000 and 3000. He took as the subject of his address the Reunion of Christendom. He congratulated the committee and their energetic secretary (Mr. Chambers) upon having accomplished in Kidderminster, by means of these afternoon services in the park, that which Dr. Lunn and other leaders in the various denominations are aiming at and longing to accomplish. Mr. Evans drew attention to the fact that the thinking men are at last beginning to see that if there is to be a reunion of the various sects of Christendom, it cannot come about by a uniformity of doctrine, ritual, or church government. In these matters there must be the widest liberty, toleration, and charity. The reason why all previous attempts at reunion have failed is that they have been made upon these lines. The common basis sought has been doctrinal or governmental. The mistake has been that men have always sought uniformity, in some way or other, instead of unity. The difference between the two is seen in nature and in the home. Uniformity in nature would mean that we could only have one kind of flower, or one kind of tree, all of the same height, the same size, and the earth all even and flat. But we like variety, not uniformity, in nature; and yet in the midst of all its variety there is unity—unity of life, the same spirit in and through all, throbbing through every blade of grass, palpitating in every leaf. Uniformity in the family would mean that all children must be of the same height, same health, same tempers. But in the home we like variety, not uniformity; and yet in every home there is a home unity of some kind, which is a spirit of love, affection, sympathy, helpfulness, sacrifice, always in a greater or less degree. So in Christendom if there is to be reunion, it must not be uniformity of opinion, doctrine, creed, ritual, or church government. It must be a unity of the spirit, the spirit of charity and toleration, the spirit of trust in God and His creature man; the spirit of faith, hope, love; the spirit of helpfulness, of service and sacrifice, which is the spirit of these services on behalf of the Infirmary.

LYE.—Early in November next a Bazaar is to be held at Lye with the object of raising £160 to complete the new class rooms, etc. A most excellent work is being done at Lye by Mr. Wrigley and his friends. The congregation is very poor, but very earnest and devoted; the endowment is small, and the need of outside help very pressing. It is hoped that friends will once more generously come to the help of this deserving cause. Contributions in money or goods will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Mrs. Evers, White Hall, Stourbridge; Mrs. A. J. Evers-Swindell, Fernhill Heath House, near Worcester; Mrs. David Martineau, South Road, Clapham Park, London, S.W.; Mrs Hall, Netherend Parsonage, near Cradley Heath; Mrs. Timmis, 174, High Street, Stourbridge; Mrs. Wrigley, Lye, Stourbridge, Secretary.

WALSALL.—The Rev. Peter Dean has been spending a much needed holiday in Wales, and on his return preached an interesting sermon, fully reported in the *Walsall Observer*, on his travels. In the course of his sermon Mr. Dean said:—To me, as to Gœthe, "Nature is the living visible garment of God." When I am in the narrow streets and slums of towns, when I see women who live by prostituting their bodies with a bestiality that even dogs and swine would resent, and men so much of devils as to be willing to live upon the proceeds of such degredation, bestiality, and wickedness, I have doubts of there being a God and of human beings having souls. But when I am amidst the silences and beauties of nature, I can feel no such doubts. God then seems to tell me I am a soul, and He is existing, living and moving, and having His being through all the grandeur, and power, and awe I experience. Unlike some preachers and writers of the present day, I am most unwilling to give up Nature as being the work of God and the manifestation of God. I shut not my eyes to the apparent evils in Nature—its redness in tooth and claw—its carelessness of the individual and carefulness of the type—I deny not the difficulty of reconciling all this with the existence of an all-loving God, but I must cling to Nature as God's work, as God's outward manifestation. I feel there can be no other rational explanation of Nature but to say it is the work of God. All other accounting for it, such as is given by the Dualism of the Parsee religion, or the recent pamphlet published by Sir George Elliott, seems to me to be utterly unsatisfactory and baseless. Separate Nature from God and I believe you will take away a vast part of the ground why men believe in and worship God. Certainly it would be so in my case. "Be still and know that I am God!" said the Psalmist. It is in this way that I can best know God.